ART AND THE CITY -

A SURVEY THROUGH THE PUBLIC ARTWORKS IN NEWTOWN, KOLKATA

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS PAINTING

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DECLARATION BY THE STUDENT

I hereby declare that the work which is being presented in this dissertation entitled "Art and The City – A Survey Through The Public Artworks in Newtown, Kolkata" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelors/Masters/Ph.D of Fine Arts in Painting is an authentic record of my own work carried out during the period from February, 2025 to April, 2025 under the supervision of (Dr) Sanjay Sen Gupta, Department of Fine Arts and Design, Sister Nivedita University.

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Introduction

Public art is a form of visual art specifically created to be experienced by the public. As it must be visually accessible to the onlooker in a physical space, therefore Public Art is usually installed or staged in easily accessible public spaces, both indoor and outdoor like city parks, public squares, roadsides, street-corners, crossings, railway stations, airports, shopping complexes and so on. Such arts include murals, sculptures, statues, memorials, public architecture and many more. They are often created in response to the place and community keeping in mind the social and cultural sensibilities as they serve a range of functions including communication, beautification, commemoration, etc. The inability to move Public Artworks from one location to another with ease distinguishes it from private art, which may be moved around and be displayed in various locations as it changes ownership. Public art can inspire and inform future generations about Cultures and histories while being a valuable asset to the community.[1]

The relationship between art and the city has long been a subject of fascination. As public art plays a significant role in shaping urban identities, fostering community engagement, and enhancing the aesthetic experience of city spaces, it possesses the power to transform urban landscapes, create cultural landmarks, and provide a platform for social commentary and reflection.

In recent years, Newtown, the satellite township of Kolkata has witnessed several public artworks, including sculptures, murals, and installations being made/installed all around the city. These artworks are often reflective of the city's social, cultural and urban landscape, which contributes to present a visual narrative to the viewers. This dissertation narrates the visual story of the germinating city, its emergence and what makes it visually distinct from the larger city, Kolkata. Thus, the role of Public Art becomes evident in shaping the identity of the emerging urban space, through an exploration of the stylistic significance, socio-cultural impact and the aesthetic contribution of the artworks.

Newtown, as a newly emerging planned city, presents a unique opportunity of case study in favour of that role of public art in shaping the form, tone and texture of urban development. The city's design and layout, coupled with its rapid growth and development, provide a fascinating backdrop for exploring the intersection of art, architecture, and urban planning. Thus, the present paper intends to illuminate the intersection of art and urban space in a rapidly modernizing city through a comprehensive survey of these artworks and a thorough analysis of their relevance and impact,.

The research hence aims to explore the diverse range of public artworks in Newtown, examining their significance, context, and impact on the urban environment. By documenting and analysing these artworks, this study seeks to understand the role of public art in shaping the city's identity and cultural narrative while revealing the complex dynamics between art, urbanism, and society in this constantly developing city.

[1] EDEN Gallery, 2021.

Chapter 1: Public artworks in Urban Spaces - An Overview

Public Art refers to any work of art which is designed for and sited in a space accessible to the masses, in outdoor spaces like a public square, parks, junctions, road-sides, as well as in indoor spaces like public halls, atriums, airports, shopping complexes and so on. Public art includes murals – painted or sculpted, statues and memorials, architectural works, monuments, sculptures, installations, site-specific artworks, light-and-sound in heritage structures, digital projections, street-theatre and other performances and so on. The tradition has existed for centuries, across numerous cultures and societies, and has served a range of functions including communication, beautification, commemoration and many more.[2]

Figure 1: Biswa Bangla Gate at Narkel Bagan crossing

Before any public art is installed at any specific site it goes through a process of observation, imagination, application and selection. The Municipal agency, however, plays a primary role in the process of selecting the artist, the site, the content, the medium, the budget and so on, followed by the process of commissioning, developing and managing the entire project. These usually are part of urbanization, developmental or cultural ventures across the metropolis, cities, townships and their suburbs. The agency that implements the public art generally

[2] Why public art matters, 2018

comprise of several departments of the municipal administration such as city planning, parks and recreation, block or panchayat level development authorities, etc. The commissioning organization requests proposals for a designated project and select an artist or group to implement the proposed work. Usually, the selected artist/s work/s with a team of multidisciplinary professionals such as public art administrators, planners, architects, and often involve the local community for the execution of the artwork.[3] Nevertheless, artists or groups are at times hand-picked or chosen by the ruling authorities or body of administration for any particular project whatsoever.

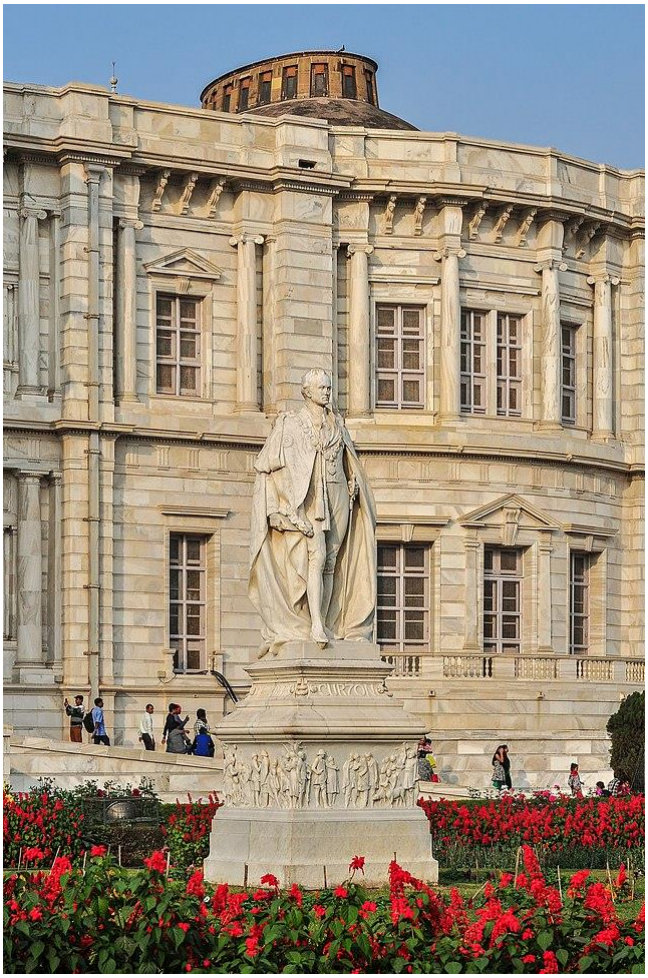

Figure 2: Statue of Lord Curzon at Victoria Memorial, Kolkata.

Generally, public art pieces are funded by municipal agencies using public funds through various channels. However, there is a growing trend where private developers are also funding and incorporating public art into their private development projects, often through public-private partnership. Public art has a vast audience to please, not just the artist and the selection committee, but the residents, onlookers, common people who can access the site. Thus, there is a degree of accountability assumed about the artwork that artists do not

[3] Why public art matters, 2018

encounter as much when creating work for private use or display. This makes public artworks distinct from artworks that find its place in museums or galleries.[4]

Figure 3:

Rural girls working with the missing stencil project

Figure 4:

Relief sculpture at the Victoria Memorial Hall

Public art can be of many types, they can be Permanent or Temporary, stand alone or integrated, Site specific installation or Performance based, Static or kinetic or digital.

Permanent public artworks are intended to stay at their position for longer periods of time maybe for decades or even centuries. Statues, sculptures, and architectural buildings generally fall into this category and thus are made with highly durable materials for example – metals like bronze, iron, steel, stones like marble, granite, sandstone, etc. The colonial statues in the Victoria Memorial complex (fig:1), The Biswa Bangla Gate in Newtown are examples of permanent public artworks.

Temporary public artwork on the other hand has a predetermined lifespan which ranges from a few hours to a few years. Installations, projections and performances created for public space falls into this category. As the burden of longevity doesn't exist the materials and techniques that the artists use is diverse and can include plants, paper, chalk, video, sound and performance, etc. the "Missing " *stencil Project* by Leena Kejriwal, in Kolkata represents the growing number of missing women to engage the public on the issue of sex trafficking, painting silhouettes of girls along with the text #missingirls and the number of missing women on walls exemplify temporary public artwork.

Stand-alone artworks are three-dimensional, freestanding, large and independent of any other structures such as buildings, walls etc. statues and land installations can be termed in this category. These works have traditionally used permanent materials and mediums such as marble or bronze, however contemporary artists have expanded their practice to include materials such as found objects and multimedia. The magnificent architectural structure of Biswa Bangla Gate at New Town, Kolkata (Figure 1) is a stand-alone public Artwork.

[4] What is public Art, 2025

Figure 5: Site-Specific Art Installation ‘Sprouts’ Designed by Vibhor Sogani

Integrated artworks are those sculptures, statues, structures that are incorporated into another structure like building, façades, pavements ceilings, walls, glazing, screens, floors and even landscaping. Integrated works may be decorative and/or functional. The Bronze relief sculptures on the walls and platforms in the Victoria Memorial Complex is an example of integrated public artwork (Figure 2).

When artworks are designed specifically for or responsive to its surroundings through scale, material, form and concept it becomes a site-specific artwork. The artwork and the site are equally important a site-specific artwork as they interact with each other like a conversation, which needs at least two people, the elements in a site-specific installation are in dialogue with one another, as each gain meaning from the other in a reciprocal relationship.[5] ‘Sprouts’ is a Site-Specific Art Installation Designed by Vibhor Sogani and is spread over a vast green area surrounding the AIIMS flyover in Delhi.[6]

Performance based public artworks include dance, theatre, music and other live actions in a public space and as they involve live performers Performance based public artworks are always temporary. These artworks are often produced in response to the unique features of or musical scores. One such performance based public art among others is Street theatres where theatrical exhibitions and performances are held in a public setting without the aid of a paid audience. Machine (1978), Aurat (1979), Hallabol (1988) and many more are few famous Indian street theatres.[7]

[5] Art term, TATE
[6] The Architects diary, April 25 2018
[7] Hussain Mehwash, 2024.

Figure 6: ‘Aurat’ being performed by Jana Natya Manch in 1980.

The artworks do not move or change its form or position such as paintings on walls or on canvases, or statues carved from stones or cast in metal that don't have any movement and stay fixed in one place are termed as Static artworks. When such artwork is installed in public spaces we call it Static Public Artwork.[8]

The word kinetic means relating to motion thus, kinetic artwork is an artwork that moves. With development in technology artists have been incorporating movement into art since the early twentieth century. To explore the possibilities of movement, introduce the element of time, reflect the importance of the machine and technology in the modern world and explore the nature of vision. Naum Gabo's Revolving Torsion, Fountain made in 1972-3 and is located at St Thomas' Hospital in Lambeth, London. The sculpture makes one complete rotation every ten minutes and from the outer periphery of the diagonal ribs a series of jets go from minimum to maximum and back to minimum in the same 10 minute cycle as they are programmed to function.[9]

The earliest form of public art in India could be traced back to the cave paintings, sculptures and rock cut Architecture of Bhimbetka, Ajanta, Ellora, Bagh, Badami etc. The rock and iron columns of Ashoka can also be labelled as public artworks made to exhibit his power and ideology. Thus, we can find various kind and forms of public artwork installed in various parts of the subcontinent created in different time periods and to serve a variety of different purposes. They may be visually, materially, texturally and contextually distinct but they all together serve as a part of the rich historical culture of adoration of public spaces that aids in community building and expression.[10]

[8] What is Public Art, 2025.
[9] Artworks and Artists of Kinetic Art, The Art Story.
[10] Yadav Beena / Kataria Ritu, 6th July 2024.

Figure 7: Revolving Torsion, Fountain made in 1972-3 at St Thomas' Hospital in Lambeth, London

Chapter 2: The Tale of Two Cities

The earliest mention of Kolkata can be found in *Manasa Mangal* by the Bengali poet Bipradas and in *Ain-e-Akbari* compiled by Abdul Fazl, the Prime Minister of Akbar.[11] Kolkata has a brief yet rich history from its birth in 1690 when Job Charnock arrived at the banks of the Hooghly river, where he leased three villages inhabited by Indian merchants, namely Sutanoti, Kalikata and Gobindapur from the zamindar Savarna Ray Chowdhuri to set up a British trade settlement by establishing an artificial riverine port.[12] The newly founded city gradually became the power centre of East India Company after the British army led by Lord Clive defeated Bengal's nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah in 1757. Along with the Imperial rule came colonial Urbanization where several industries grew and factories were built. With this economic growth new architecture also developed with palaces built in the British sector of the city further the social elites of the city also built mansions outside the British sector that imitated British architecture. [13] They also imposed Western sensibilities and aestheticism through establishing art schools in Calcutta and Madras in 1854 and in Bombay in 1857 along with commemorating marble or bronze statues, busts of the queen, princes and other British generals all over the city. built to project the power and grandeur of the imperial rulers that stayed all around the city long after India got its Independence.

CALCUTTA
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RIVER HOOGHLY
FORT WILLIAM
REFERENCE TO THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS.
CHURCHES & CHAPELS

Figure 8: Map of the city of Calcutta, India made in 1842.

This chapter discusses about the development of the city of Calcutta (now Kolkata), its expansion, the creation of the two satellite cities of Salt Lake and Newtown and its century-old culture of displaying and installing art works in public spaces.

[11] Sinha N.K., Banerjee-Guha Swapna, 2025.
[12] Kolkata - A Municipal History.
[13] Sinha N.K., Banerjee-Guha Swapna, 2025.

The pre-Independence art and architecture of the city was an attempt to cater to the Western sensibilities and impose their ego on the native psyche. After independence, the colonial past still remained deeply embedded in the city's cultural demography and often pops up through its Art, Architecture, Music, etc. As the public artworks under review are mainly commissioned by the Government for various reasons including beautification, or installed by private entities with due permission from the Government. Thus, they reflect the agenda and intent of the ruling class or party whatsoever. Especially the statues of political personalities are placed, and occasionally replaced, by the new Government in power. Thus, we can reckon the shifts in public imagery along with the shifting of political choices and outlook.

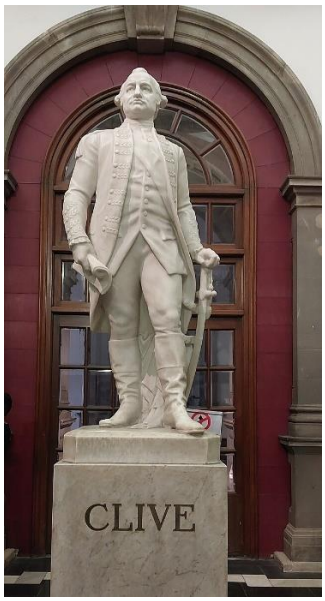

Figure 9: Statue of Robert Clive at Victoria Memorial, Kolkata.

Figure 10: Cornwallis, Governor-General, 1786-1793, posing as a Roman emperor –Calcutta's first colonial statue in 1803.

Initiated as a post-independence political wave and an attempt of decolonization, the first United Front government in West Bengal removed all the statues of colonial rulers from several locations across the city. The project was undertaken by the Public Works Department from 1967 to 1969, when the statues were transported to the grounds of the Flagstaff House in Barrackpore. Very few of such colonial statues remain today at their original places inside the grounds of Victoria Memorial. However, the earliest statues of Indian Nationalist leaders were commissioned in the pre-Independence years to the Indian sculptor Debiprosad Roy Choudhury one of the most important figures in the history of Western academic sculpting in Bengal as well as India. It was for the making of two bronze sculptures of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Surendranath Banerjee that were completed in 1934 and 1941 respectively. In 1958, he also sculpted the bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi on his Dandi March that stood at Park Street-Chowringhree junction, till it was moved up to the Red Road crossing in the late 1980s.

Figure 11: Statue of Surendranath Banerjee, Kolkata.

Figure 12: Statue of Khudiram Bose in City of Calcutta.

Figure 13: Statue of Masterda Surjya Sen (1893-1934), made in 1976, placed in front of the Calcutta High Court.

Over the 1970s, statues of a series of Indian nationalist leaders were erected in the spots emptied of the statues of the colonial masters.[14] In 1970, statue of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das came up in the island near Maidan to replace the statue of Lord Canning that was shifted to Barrackpore, in 1972, a sculpture of Khudiram Bose, replaced the statue of Lord Auckland on the same pedestal near the Bidhan Sabha Bhavan, Along with Masterda Surjya Sen's statue that took Lord Northbrook's place in front of the Calcutta High Court. This brought

[14] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 2020

about a visual shift when it comes to artwork in public spaces but along with it what also was evident was the lingering colonial aestheticism that remained in the newly erected statues of the Indian freedom fighters. Where the colonial genre of figurative sculpture persisted with domesticated subject matter through local representational and commemorative practice.

Figure 14: Netaji astride a horse, bronze statue by Nagesh Yavalkar, 1969, installed at the Shyambazar five roads junction.

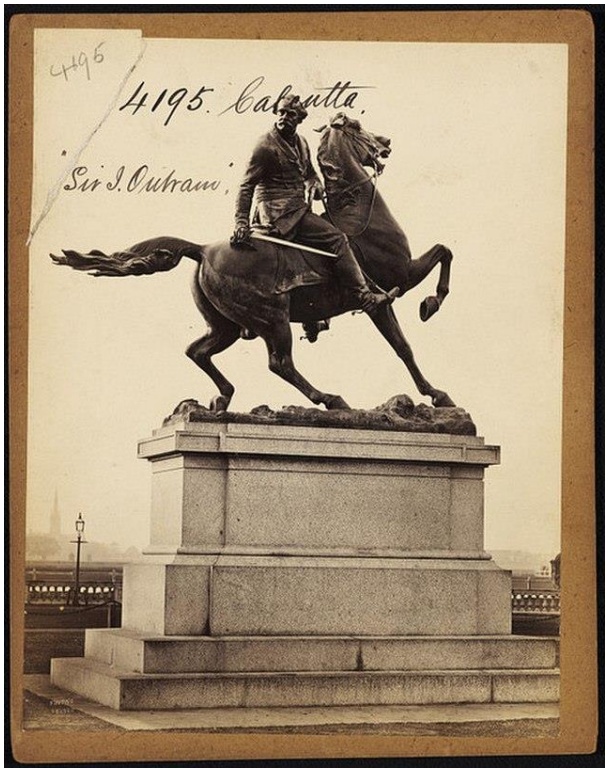

Figure 15: Statue of Sir James Outram in Calcutta, 1873

Figure 16: Mosaic mural made in 1963 by Amal Ghosh at the façade of UCO bank head office, Calcutta.

The iconic Netaji statue at Shyambazar 5-point crossing Sculpted in 1969 by Nagesh Yoglekar shows Netaji mounted on a horse back is a prime example of this. Here, Netaji can be seen posing in the same way as the Lieutenant-General James Outram's bronze sculpture by John Henry Foley that can be found today in the Victoria Memorial Complex. The public spaces in Kolkata are filled with such marble and bronze statues and busts today we can find many more made of other materials like plaster and fibre cast that on the surface looks like the marble but is much cheaper to produce. Today, statues of Indian icons have become a very common sight in public spaces. Busts and full figure statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami

Vivekananda, Netaji most commonly among many others can be found at almost every junction.

Figure 17: Zoomed image of Mosaic mural at UCO bank head office.

Figure 18: A crowd watches a mural being painted by Sanu Lahiri and team in 1985

Public spaces of Kolkata started to be adorned with murals from the 1960's. Paintings as well as mosaic murals were made in building walls. The mural that can be found at the façade of the UCO bank head office building located at Old Court House Street is considered to be the first mosaic mural of Kolkata. Made in 1963 by artist Amal Ghosh the 80ft mosaic mural on the bank building adjacent to Tea Board. The artwork presents scenes from the city life and its relation with nature with images of flora and fauna compositionally integrated with city scenes. It still exists today and has retained its colour but is obscured by the greenery and other clutter that have come up on the pavement in front of it. Unlike the mural painted by Shanu Lahiri and her team of artists on a 200-metre-long wall of the workshop of Hindustan

Motors along Justice Chandra Madhab Road in 1985, which was wiped out and painted over with flat blue colour. The mural celebrated harmony between nature and humankind with drawings of birds, animals and trees.

Through a City that is Becoming

With time the city's population grew and because of the exodus of people from Bangladesh in 1947 after the partition of India it became impossible to for the city to accommodate the excess population. Thus in 1955 The Bengal government under Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy Proposed to fill-up the salt lakes in the east of Kolkata to create the Salt Lake city or Bidhannagar to accommodate the ever-growing population.[15] From the 70's people from middle and low-income groups started residing in the newly created city. However, today the high-end satellite town is far from that objective, with the East-West Metro making its way through the enormous mansions, high-rises, shopping malls, multiplexes and the giant sports stadium.[16] In this new city the artworks installed in the public spaces mostly in the islands of every junction can be labelled as an extension of the statues in Kolkata. From Satyajit Ray in EZCC island, to Mother Teresa in HB island, Mahatma Gandhi in AD island, Rabindranath Tagore in Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan Island and many more exemplify the statue mania[17] for the sake of beautification.[18]

Figure 19: The Salt Water Lake east of Calcutta crowded with boats with the city in the distance by Thomas Prinsep.

[15] Ganguly Sitangshu Shekhar, 2012
[16] Chaudhuri Prasun, 2024
[17] Deborah Cherry, 2009.
[18] TT Bureau, 2015

Figure 20: Statue of Satyajit Ray at EZCC Island.

Figure 21: Statue of Swami Vivekananda at Central Park.

The population kept rising to the point where the newly built Salt Lake too failed to accommodate the excess people. In the late 1990s the Government of Bengal under then Chief Minister Jyoti Basu planned to develop a new satellite city nearly three times the size of Salt Lake in the North eastern periphery of the city, which actualised following the liberalization of the economy, and influenced by private developers and the entry of the private sector in the housing sector. Thus, giving birth to Rajarhat Newtown which developed in phases and is divided into Action Area I, II, III and a Central Business District. The name Rajarhat came from the word's "*raja*", meaning king, and "*haat*", meaning marketplace, in Bengali. "The name of Rajarhat came about in 1649 when Gourhari Ray Chaudhury decided to start a market in the area. He was the son of Lakshmikanta Gangopadhyay of the Sabarna Ray Chaudhury family. In 1608, Raja Man Singh had given Gangopadhyay zamindari of five parganas from Barrackpore to Gangasagar. They were the tax-collectors (*majumdar*) and revered as kings, the name Rajarhat was given to just the spot where the market came up but it spread to include the area surrounding it." said historian Haripada Bhowmick while explaining about the etymology and history behind the township.[19]

This satellite city presents public artworks that are visually distinct from what we've been used to see around Kolkata and Salt Lake. The icon statues make way to installations, sculptures and murals, that have been installed or made at different junctions, parks, underpasses, etc. These artworks moved away from being the reproductions of the colonial marble and bronze statues, a constant sight in Kolkata and Salt Lake, and brought about a

[19] Sarkar Brinda, 2019

modern change to the artworks in public space using newer mediums such as cement, iron, steel, tiles, enamel paint etc. to create the artworks. Which likely could resonate with the city dwellers.

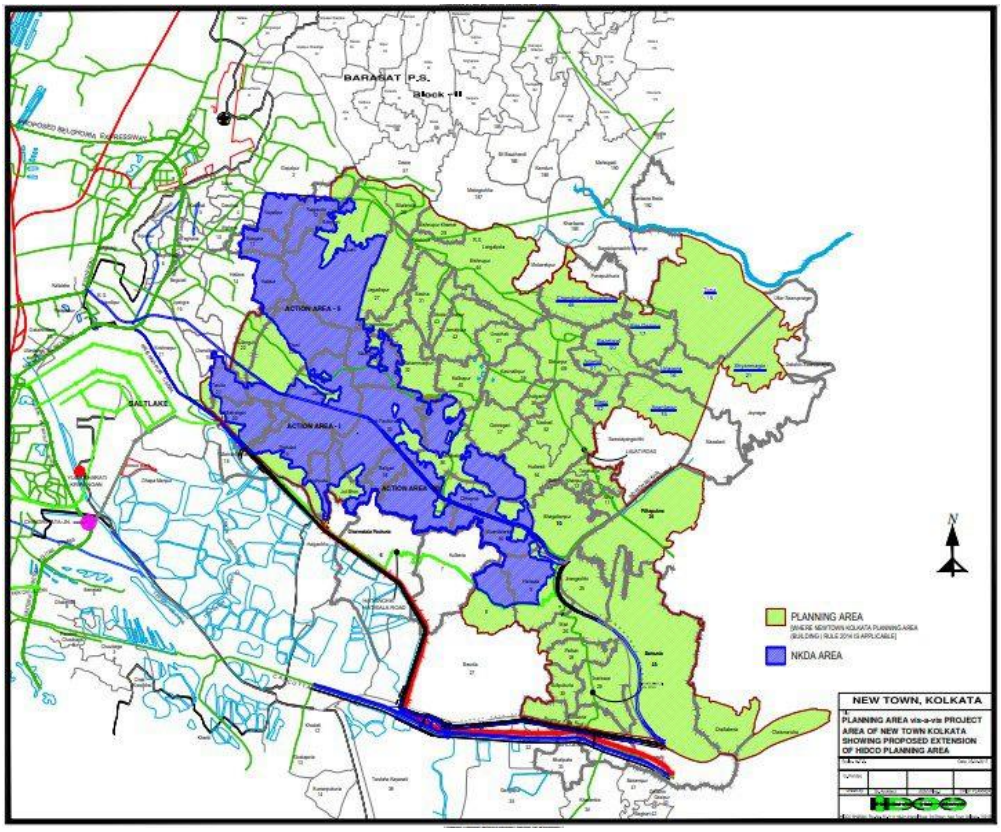

Figure 22: Map of New Town, Kolkata.

Figure 23: Aerial view of Narkel Bagan More, New Town

Chapter 3: Sculptures and Installations in Newtown

The city of Newtown has been under constant development for over two decades now, since its planning and subsequent land acquisition from 1996 to 2006. The period from 2007 to 2010 witnessed the completion of plenty of infrastructural facilities in Action Area I and infrastructural development for the other Action Areas, gradually achieving the required development and making it suitable for urban habitation.

New Town caters to the service sector by providing workplaces, financial institutions, universities, schools, colleges, think tanks, research institutions, art galleries, hospitals, etc. The city boasts a mix of residential, commercial and industrial complexes in close proximity and displays a poly-centric landscape characterized by multiple, interconnected centres of activity, service and residence, these centres being interlinked through transportation, communication, and economic networks, encouraging a sense of regional integration. As one travels through New Town, they are greeted by wide roads, towering buildings in residential, commercial, and industrial complexes, along with various state-sanctioned installations, sculptures, and architectural structures in its proximity. Across the city these state-led designed public art and architecture stand out as markers of intent to develop and transform the landscape into a particular form of urbanity.[20]

Figure 24: Biswa Bangla gate at New Town, Kolkata.

[20] Sarkar Debarun, November 2022

At the Narkel Bagan crossing the towering structure of The Biswa Bangla Gate (formerly called as Kolkata Gate) punctuates the city. Erected at the 3rd Rotary in front of Rabindra Tirtha on Biswa Bangla Sarani, it has a unique architectural feature with two parabolic arches rising from 4 islands at the inter-section of the road-crossing and joining at the top. The architectural structure stands 55 meters tall and has an overall diameter of 220 metres with a circular ring shape platform walkway of 60 meter diameter at a height 25m from ground designed to accommodate around 100 viewers at a time.[21]

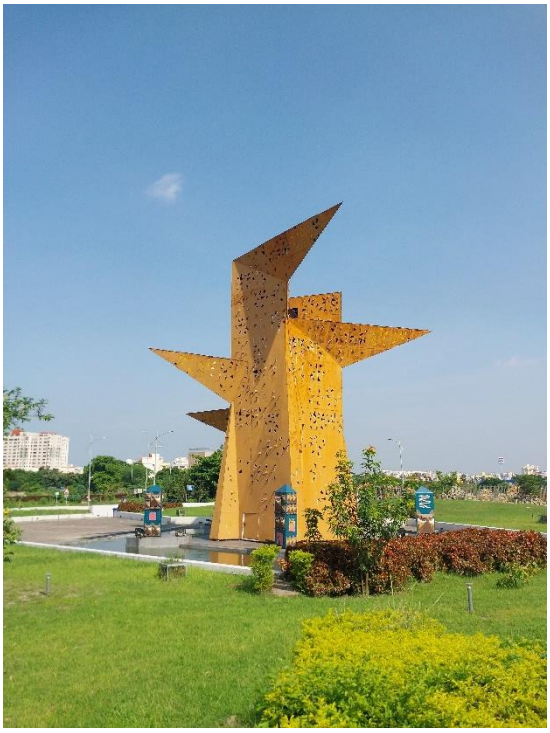

Figure 25: Mangaldeep Sculpture located at Akankha Island.

The first choice for the erection of the proposed structure of the Gate was on VIP Road or Kazi Nazrul Islam Sarani, near the Haldiram's flyover from the airport, which rather marked the entry into New Town. The other option was near Chinar Park, or near Nazrul Tirtha but these choices were discarded due to lack of space, litigation and the under-construction Metro corridor with elevated pillars on the ground, presented as another roadblock congesting these spaces further.

Finally, after eliminating almost every other option owing to some problem or the other, the structure was erected at the location of Narkelbagan crossing, that leads in all the four directions towards Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in the north, the wetlands in the south, Sector 5 in the west and Action Area 3 in the east.[22]

This magnificent structure was designed by a Pune based Architectural firm Vector Designs and constructed between 6 March 2017 and 27 January 2018. The structure comprises of two inverted parabolas constructed using flat steel plates in entirety weighing Around 70 tons. Along with a circular ring shape platform walkway with an outer circumference made of curved double-glazed glass. This walkway functions as a viewing gallery with the interior

[21] biswabanglagatekolkata.in
[22] biswabanglagatekolkata.in

wall adorned with the portraits of as well as aphorisms and quotations by historical and nationalist icons like Rabindranath Tagore, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sarojini Naidu, Swami Vivekananda, Netaji, Ramkrishna and so on. The panorama also includes a poem written by then Chief Minister of West Bengal.[23]

Figure 26: Smaller structures around Mangaldeep.

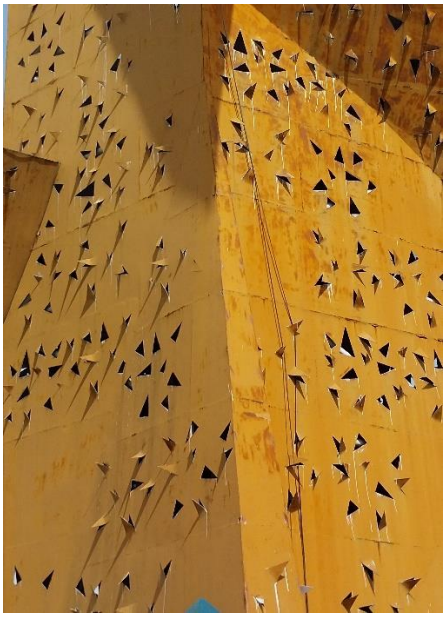

Figure 27: Zoomed image of Mangaldeep.

Following the Biswa Bangla Sarani in the north, we encounter the installation called Mangaldeep, created by architect Prabir Mitra, at Aakankha Island.[24] It is a huge geometrical metallic installation that is modern in representation, but resembles a traditional *Poncho Pradeep*, i.e., a group of five lamps, that is lit in Bengali households during auspicious occasions. It has five pyramidal lamps like protrusion in different directions from the structure and has triangular marks cut out all over the metal frame. Surrounding it are four smaller structures shaped like triangular prism with a tetrahedron top. It has pyramid shaped owls of different sizes and reliefs representing different elements protruding on all sides.

In a neighboring island almost hiding behind palm, mango and bamboo trees is the cement sculpture titled 20 pillars. This artwork created by sculptor Rupchand Kundu by carving out portraits wearing surgical masks from discarded pillars which were waste products of pilling works. These twenty statues intend to depict the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had on our lives in 2020. The sculptures serve as a reminder or symbol for the isolation, fear along with the acts of resilience, sacrifice, adaptation and the collective human experience during this difficult time.[25]

Traveling along the Biswa Bangla Sarani on the opposite side of the Bangla Misti Hub the road bends into a street leading to lush greens of the Rajarhat wetlands that is a go to place for the city's bird watchers. At this junction we find two fibreglass Owls placed in two islands at either side of the street as if they are the *Dwarpal* or gate keepers to the place. The statues with exaggerated features like wide eyes along with a pair of ears is covered in white paint with off white eyes and black iris, the paint today is flaking off revealing the fibreglass surface. Although not much is known about the artist and the time of erection of the statutes.

[23] Sarkar Debarun, November 2022
[24] Banerjee Sudeshna, 2024
[25] Mitra Biswabijoy, 2021.

Yet, they have become a major landmark in Newtown today as the junction is now called "*Pechar More*" or "owl more".

Figure 28: 20 Pillars Sculpture by Rupchand Kundu

Figure 29: "*Pechar More*" or "owl more" opposite of Bangla Misti Hub

Figure 30: "*Pechar More*" or "owl more" opposite of Bangla Misti Hub

Entering the street through the *Pechar more* we arrive at the Artistic Statue More. It comprises of eight islands at the junction each having an artwork installed. Altogether there

are five statues and a mosaic mural at this junction alone. Here we first encounter a huge head of a girl with her hair tied into two braids. This statue on closer observation can be seen being made of several metal nuts welded together to create the facial features and even the forms of the hairs and braids. The face of the statue mounted on a cemented platform on the island was covered with a large surgical mask during the Covid 19 pandemic to raise awareness on the safety measures to be taken at that time.

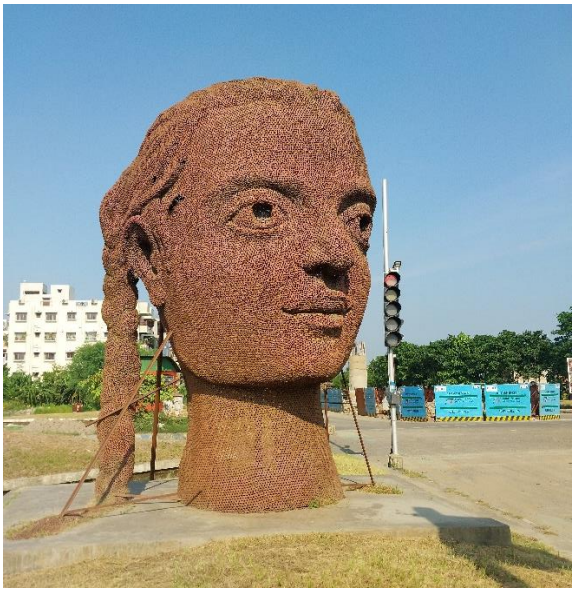

Figure 31: Sculpture of a girl with her hair tied into two braids at the Artistic Statue More.

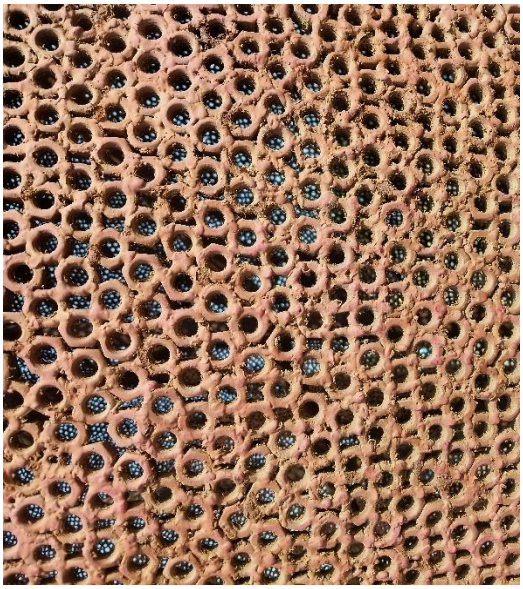

Figure 32: Zoomed image of the sculpture in Artistic Statue More.

In the island on the opposite side, we see a dejected man with his head lowered and his arms above his knees sitting on a gigantic palm that seems like protruding out of the ground. The palm is made up of metal chains joined together, whereas the man sitting on it is created by joining tons of metal nuts and spanners. The statue initially created to adorn the Durga Puja pandal of Kashi Bose Lane near Shyambazar area in north Kolkata in 2016 by artist Pradip Das was later moved and installed in its present location. The statue inspired from Rodin's sculpture the thinker and Chaplin's movie Modern Times presents a very vulnerable and sensitive concept through the use of a hard medium like metal chains, nuts and spanners, the artist proclaimed in an interview.[26] The statue got damaged at some point of time which is evident from its present condition as today the man sits with a missing left arm and a portion from its right leg.

On another island we see a statue comprising of the portraits of three icons of the Bengal renaissance titled 'Three Luminaries' by artist Subhaprasanna Bhattacharjee. The artwork comprises of three flat metal plates cut out into the portraits of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Raja Rammohan Roy coloured in yellow, green and blue respectively placed on a cemented platform.

The largest sculpture at this location peeps just from behind that group of three. In this island on the south of the junction that turns to the Aliah University Road we see several metal pipes are joined together to form two geometrical human figures, like a mother and a daughter. The mother is carrying a basket on her head with her left hand holding on to it with

[26] Shaw Jayanta, 2016

the daughter beside her with long hair flowing down her head. The black painted metal pipes are straight and joined together to give the statue an angular form.

Figure 33: Statue of a dejected man sitting on a palm.

Figure 34: Zoomed in image.

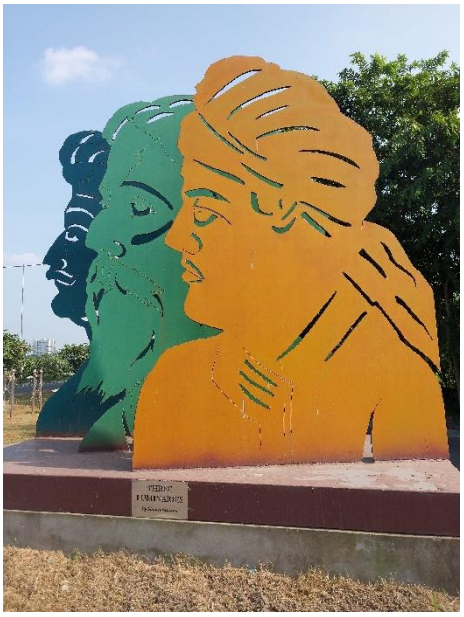

Figure 35: 'Three Luminaries' by artist Subhaprasanna Bhattacharjee

Figure 36: Statue of Mother and Daughter made using metal pipes.

Travelling down the Aliah University Road from the artistic statue more towards Aliah University we witness a few more statues. The first of those is the statue of a migrant woman carrying a baby in her arms along with two children beside her. There is a circular ring behind her head with four hands protruding out on either side. Originally created as the Durga idol for Barisha Club Durga puja at Behala Sakherbazar in 2020. The fibreglass statue created by sculptor Pallab Bhowmick in his studio at Krishnanagar in Nadia district presented the goddess as a migrant worker with a shirtless child on her lap conceived as Kartick. Goddess Saraswati and Lakshmi are also represented as migrant children standing beside their mother.

The statue however bears resemblance to Bikash Bhattacharjee's 1989 oil painting 'Darpamoyee.'[27] The statue is greyish in colour and looks as if is moulded out of clay. It was installed at its present location in March 2021 after the club officials along with the state government agreed upon preserving the work of art.[28]

Figure 37: Fibreglass statue of Migrant woman and children by Pallab Bhowmik

At the Aliah University crossing island is a glass installation by artist Sisir Sahana. The artwork titled 'Growth' is noted as the largest outdoor glass installation in India. The installation standing at 24ft height and 13ft width has a central glass tower with an arrow like metal structure dissecting it through the middle horizontally. It has been decorated with floral and foliage patterns in bold vermillion and red colours along with other designs in grey and ultramarine. The artwork has two human figures on either side of the arrow -- a man and a woman -- solid black in colour superimposed onto the lower half of the pillar. It symbolizes the role of both the sexes in the cultural growth of the society. Another figure placed on the top is sitting on the pillar with legs suspended downwards and looking up into the sky symbolizing the scientific, socio-cultural development of the city. The artwork is mounted on a brick and cement platform which has a metal plate with the inscriptions of the title of the artwork and the name of the artist attached to it. It is surrounded with a metal boundary with a few glass attachments to it that have similar floral patterns and Bengali quotes from Rabindranath Tagore's poems like '*Banglar Pawn, Bangalir Asha,' 'Bolo Bir, Ami chiro unotto Shir' and 'Ami bonchito byatha pothobashi chiro grihohara joto pothiker.'*

[27] Lifestyle desk, 2020
[28] Nandi Soumitra, 2021.

Figure 38: Outdoor glass installation titled ‘Growth’ by Sisir Sahana

Figure 39: Installation titled ‘Middle Age’ by Sisir Sahana

Figure 40: Installation titled ‘Middle Age’ by Sisir Sahana

In the island opposite to it, is another artwork by the same artist titled Middle Age. This installation comprises of glass plates attached into three metal frames. The plate on the middle consists of an image of a vermillion-coloured plant growing from its roots and a pair of blue birds sitting on its leaves. With the plates on either side decorated in blue foliage. Today, both these artworks have been surrounded by tall grasses and wild weeds compromising its visibility.

At the junction in front of the Bodhicharya Senior Secondary school often referred to as the *Gondar More* or Rhino Island, stands two huge one horned rhino statue on two islands respectively. The fibreglass statues facing towards the Aliyah University Road is painted over with masked faces depicting different emotion and geometric, floral designs of different shades of yellow, green, red and many more. Today the colours are fading and flaking along with delicate parts like tails being broken from the statues.

Figure 41: Sculpture '*Gondar More'* or 'Rhino Island' in front of the Bodhicharya Senior Secondary school.

Around the Ecospace roundabout vehicles travel around the island without noticing behind the *Sirish* and *Rudrapalash* Grove is a statue of a man playing the ektara to an audience comprising of four dogs. The statue has an almost skeletal figure with long hairs and beard sitting on top of a rock platform carrying a side bag, playing the musical instrument *ektara* with his hair and shirt being blown away by air. The dogs surrounding the man looks at him as if being absorbed into the music. The fibreglass statue coated with a brownish paint has an inscription in one rock that reads as 'Debu 2012' which informs us about the year of execution and installation of this artwork. Today the layer of paint has been flaking off and structural damage can be observed in the dogs, from having limbs missing to looking completely degenerative.

At the Newtown bus stand crossing island hiding behind the ongoing construction for the metro station is a fibreglass statue of a portrait bust mounted on a pillar. Accompanying it on each side are two horse figures. The portrait has elongated eyes and ears with ornamented crown and neck piece. Dust has accumulated all over the artwork due to lack of maintenance and the on-going construction works. At the bottom of the statue on the right is a dust clad plate with the text that can be read with difficulty when observed closely –

> *'Sculpture inaugurated by former Indian cricket captain Sri Sourav Ganguly on 10/06/2012 in presence of Firhad Hakim M-I-C Urban Development Department Government of West Bengal'*

The black paint on the artwork has torn off from several spots especially the tails of the horses making the underlying material apparent.

Figure 42: Statue of a man playing the ektara to an audience comprising of four dogs as ‘Debu 2012’

Figure 43: Fibreglass statue of a portrait bust mounted on a pillar with two horse figures located in Newtown Bus Stop.

The divider at the Police Phari crossing at the Biswa Bangla Sarani shelters an artwork that comprises of five human figures. The one in front is the statue of Swami Vivekananda – who appears to be standing with a stern posture and a straight face. Following him are four figures representing people from different religions -- Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Sikhism respectively, with grossly disproportionate figures and frigid faces. The platform on which the statues are mounted bears an inscription stating the title of the artwork –

'Swami Vivekananda leading an all-Religion group to Vivek Tirtha.'

This is because of the statues facing the Vivek Tirtha building across Biswa Bangla Sarani.

Figure 44: Statue titled 'Swami Vivekananda leading an all-Religion group to Vivek Tirtha.' at the Police Phari crossing.

Thus, the landscape of Newtown's public spaces has been filled with several public artworks made by using different materials at different points of time. The replica of Seven Wonders of the World could be seen at Eco Park that consists of the miniature versions of the Taj Mahal, the Pyramids, the Sphinx, Christ the Redeemer, Easter Island statues, the Colosseum and The Lost City of Petra. At the sculpture we encounter several statues and reliefs that depicts portraits of social and cultural icons like Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Satyajit Roy, Swami Vivekananda, etc. along with historical scenes from tales of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Battle of Plassey and lots more.

The sculptures and installations scattered throughout Newtown are often far more than decorative addition. They serve as visual narratives that reflect the city's evolution, ideals, and layered identity. From re-imagined Durga idols to modern glass Installation, they play a role in shaping public spaces as well as visual experiences where history, culture, and urban

development intersect, offering residents and onlookers a chance to pause and reflect within a constantly transforming cosmopolitan environment.

Figure 45: Relief showing Scene from Ananda Math at Sculpture Garden, Eco Park.

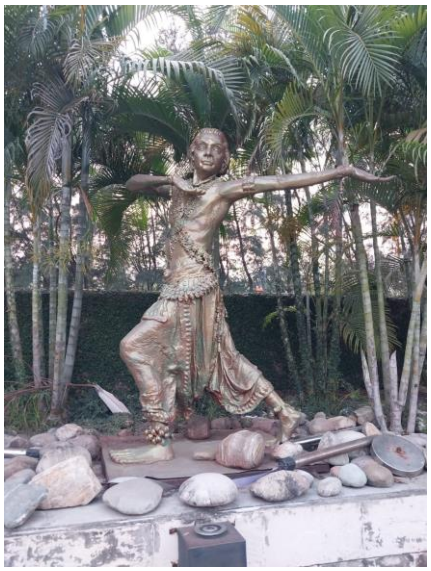

Figure 46: Statue of Uday Shankar at Sculpture Garden, Eco Park.

Figure 47: Replica of Taj Mahal at the Seven Wonders Garden in Eco Park

Chapter 4: Murals in Newtown.

Murals emerged as a form of art to adorn and beautify public spaces in the city of Kolkata around 1960's.[29] With the constant urbanization and extension of its peripheries, the city was beautified with several public artworks including Murals. Newtown since its inception around 2007 to 2010 has its own set of murals that includes both in the mediums of painting and mosaic-tiles. With the gradual urban development of this township, sculptures, statues and installations were executed and installed; murals share the same emergence story as them. Like sculptures, statues and installations, it serves an important part in the adornment of the city.

The walls of the subways that connects either side of the roads for pedestrians has acted as primary surface for the mural paintings. The Rabindra Tirtha subway shelters a mural that illustrates moments from people life in Newtown and Kolkata.

This mural is painted into two panels with a pillar dividing them through the centre. Cartoony figures with bold black outlines, flat colours and exaggerated expressions are depicted doing various activities. In the extreme left a group of people are shown buying tea from a tea seller with the Nazrul Tirtha architecture in the background then we enter an indoor space with a man teaching his student to sing while playing the harmonium, behind them a girl dancing and in front a cat sitting. Next to them a man is playing the guitar while a boy and a girl have their food while enjoying the music. Then we see a family playing carom together. Next, a group of boys playing cricket, few people riding bicycles, walking, jogging, listening to music with the Biswa Bangla gate at the backdrop.

Few people are planting trees while people are enjoying swimming in a lake at the back marking the end of the first panel. In the next panel we see scenes from the city of Kolkata starting with some people enjoying their ride in a Tram, following it is a crowded bus. Then we see a taxi rider, a hawker and a mughlai food seller in the backdrop of the Victoria Memorial Hall.

Figure 48: Partial view of the Mural Painting at Rabindra Tirtha subway.

[29] Das Soumitra, 2022

Further we see people having phuchka, ice cream and jhalmuri from a phuchka seller, an ice-cream seller and a jhalmuri seller respectively. A photographer capturing the scenery of the Howrah Bridge at sunset, a couple of flower sellers, a kid with an old lady visiting a Durga Puja mandap and a group of people buying fish. At the bottom of the extreme right we see the names signed by the artists who executed the artwork. This mural executed by Smarak Roy and his team of artists celebrates the city's flavours and culture, through a unique artistic style that blends the soul of the city with humour and fun.

Figure 49: Partial view of the Mural Painting at Rabindra Tirtha subway

Figure 50: Partial view of the Mural Painting at Rabindra Tirtha subway

Another mural that celebrates the city of Kolkata and Newtown finds its place at the adjacent subway that connects Rabindra Tirtha and Smart Plaza. The mural created by artist Sayan Mukherjee starts with the image of a Daliyah and a pinwheel or tagar flower; above them a group of flying birds leads us to a scene with two men taking a dip in the Hooghly River in the backdrop of Howrah Bridge at sunset. Then we see a crowd in front of the new town Coffee House following which we encounter another man taking a dip in the Ganges while

praying. in front of the Dakshineshwar Temple, an iconic place of worship for the Bengali Hidus. Hereafter we see two Bengali cuisines consisting of the Hilsa fish and Prawns that signify the Bangal and Ghoti communities of Bengal respectively. Then we see an image of Belur Math, The Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission a place of pilgrimage for people from all over the world professing different religious faiths. [30]

Figure 51: Partial view of the Mural Painting at Rabindra Tirtha subway

Further we encounter a group of people coloured in various hues gathered in front of the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, followed by images of iconic spots of Kolkata like the Princep Monument, The Vidyasagar Setu and a Tram. A group of boys playing football in the grounds of Maidan while the majestic architecture of The Victoria Memorial Hall peeps from the distance beyond the grove.

Figure 53: Partial view of the Mural Painting at Smart Plaza subway

Covered in Bright yellow is an image of the iconic Taxi of Kolkata followed by the Netaji statue at the Shyam Bazar crossing. A scene with kashful or kans grass flower that in Bengali culture seen as a symbol of autumn approaching and beginning of the Durga

[30] Belurmath.org

Puja Celebrations, following which is an image of Goddess Durga. The mural ends with a view of the Biswa Bangla Gate with Traffic underneath.

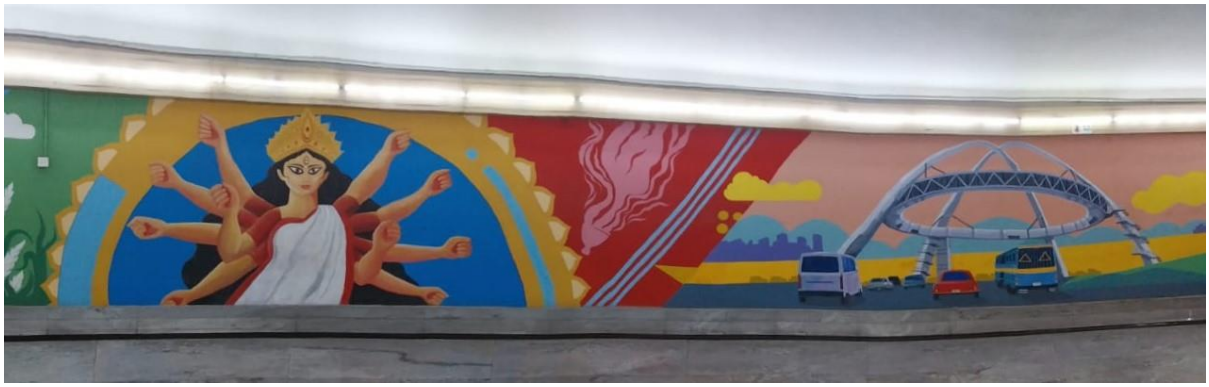

Figure 54: Partial view of the Mural Painting at Smart Plaza subway

The Walls of the under Pass at Narkel Bagan shelters another captivating mural by artist Sayan Mukherjee. This mural obtains its inspiration from nature. Thus, flora and fauna become the main subject for this mural. Images of birds like Parrots, Maynas, stork, owl, Kingfishers along with flowers and plants like Lotus, Water lily, Daliah, Tulip, Sunflower, Clover adorns the walls. With a rich and vibrant colour palette the artist brings the subjects to life and light up the mundane scenery for the commuters.

Figure 55: Partial view of the Mural Painting at Narkel Bagan Underpass.

Figure 56: Partial view of the Mural Painting at Narkel Bagan Underpass.

Figure 57: Partial view of the Mural Painting at the entrance of Eco Park gate no. 1

Figure 58: Partial view of the Mural Painting at the entrance of Eco Park gate no. 1

While entering Eco Park through gate no. 1 we encounter a stretch of wall carrying mural paintings, which also contributes to the naming of the street as 'Art Street'. The long stretch of mural executed by commercial artwork company 'srs creative space' starts with an image of Satyajit Ray looking through a movie camera, following which is a movie reel containing images of his movie characters and scenes, 'Hirak Rajar Deshe', 'Feluda', 'Mahanagar', 'Panther Panchali' respectively.

Figure 59: Partial View of Mural Painting at Eco Park Gate No. 1 Entrance.

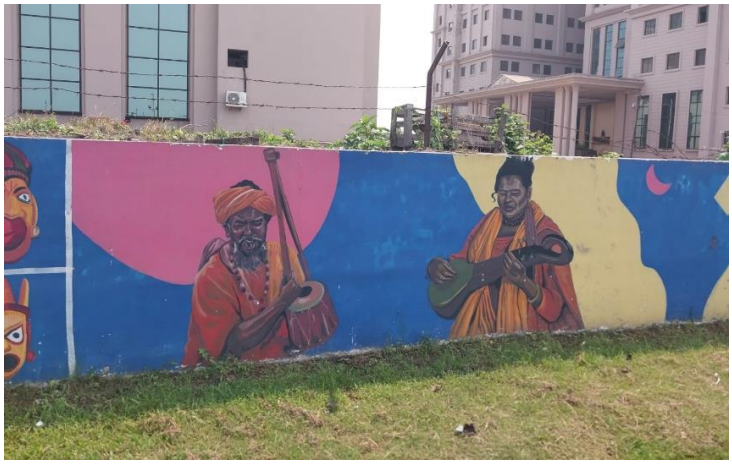

Figure 60: Partial View of Mural Painting at Eco Park Gate No. 1 Entrance.

Then we see a group of Santhal women dancing and a man playing the dholak, followed by masks and a couple of Baul singers. Hereafter the image of Newtown Coffee House makes way to a couple of Kathak dancers. Clay horse of Krishnanagar and wooden dolls of Burdwan are an import part of Bengal's art, whose image also finds its place in this Mural. The national animal of India the Royal Bengal Tiger is also present. Following these are the portraits of Rabindranath Tagore, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sharada Devi. A tram moving through the streets gives way to a woman with the Dhunuchi (Clay or earthenware vessel that holds burning incense) in her mouth, dancing in front of the Goddess Durga idol.

Figure 61: Partial View of Mural Painting at Eco Park Gate No. 1 Entrance.

Then continues the images of iconic spots from Kolkata and Newtown, Victoria Memoria hall, Biswa Bangla Gate, Biswa Bangla Convention Centre followed by the HIDCO Bhawan. Further we see images that visualize the concept of the digital world and smart city; a man

wearing headphones, a girl wearing Virtual Reality Glasses, a city connected through wifi and circuits flowing as veins in an arm and a robotic hand with an extended finger towards a human hand extending a finger back with the Biswa Bangla icon in the middle. Reminiscent of the human relation with technology and how it germinates a new age civilization.

Figure 62: Mural Painting Near Eco Park Lake Drive.

Figure 63: Mural Painting Near Eco Park Lake Drive

Travelling down the Eco Park Road towards Lake Drive we encounter another stretch of murals near the Eiffel Tower Replica. Containing images of plants, leaves, flowers, masks, traditional art, etc. Moving further down the street we come across the boundary wall of Harinalay or Deer Park. This wall shelters images of several species of animals and birds like an alligator, leopard, gorilla, swans, parrots, turtles and many more.

Figure 64: Pattachitra style paintings at the subway near mangaldeep.

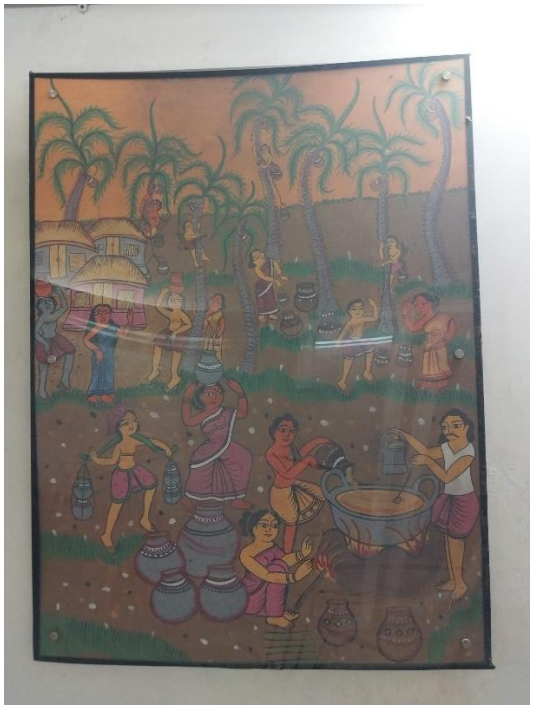

Figure 65: Pattachitra style paintings at the subway near mangaldeep.

Upon entering the subway at the Mangaldeep junction one comes across several panels containing Bengal's Pattachitra style paintings. These glass-framed paintings display scenes from villages and the daily life of the villagers forms the primary subject matter for the images. Different panels present scenes depicting men and women extracting sap from palm trees and making patali gur (jaggery) out of it, men pulling plough and women carrying paddy. People fishing, making musical instruments like harmonium and veena and dancing. A group of men having hukkah, people making pottery, celebrating local festivals and so on. The paintings with flat colours and bold outlines demonstrate the beauty and narrative quality of this century old painting technique from Bengal. These artworks by Anand Chitrakar (we derive from a sign on a painting) presents the daily scenes from Bengal's villages, local flora, fauna, festivities, cultural practices and many more to the commuters of the Township.

Figure 66: Pattachitra style paintings at the subway near Mangaldeep.

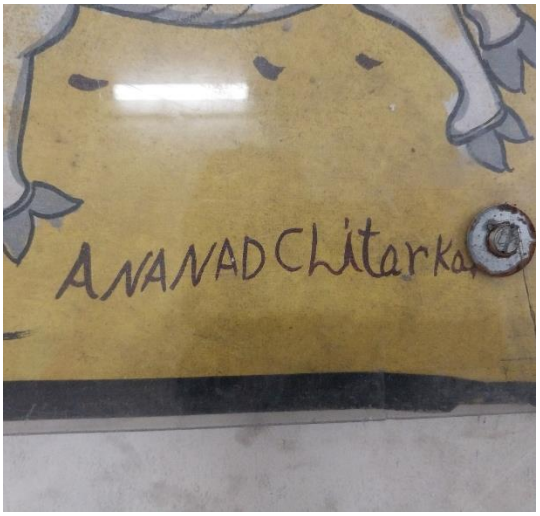

Figure 67: Pattachitra style paintings at the subway near Mangaldeep.

In one of the islands at the Artistic Statue More we encounter the only mosaic mural at a public space in Newtown. The mural created by joining thousands of broken pieces of tiles and designing them into an image in the form of a collage. The image depicts a dhoti kurta clad man holding flowers in his hand looking at his beloved, a woman wearing saree sitting next to him with a parrot sitting on her palm. The rest of the images consists of a tree, few buildings along with birds and animals like tortoise, fish, parrot, rooster, elephant, peacock and many more. The artwork titled 'Paradise' presents to the viewers a representation of what paradise is in artist Ashoke Mullick's imagination. People being one with nature and civilization.

Thus, the murals in Newtown, showcase the artistic vibrancy of the township, transforming public spaces into canvases that reflects and celebrates everyday life, traditions, and urban identity. By depicting scenes of city life, nature, and Bengal's art, culture and architecture, these murals not only beautify the urban landscape but also create a sense of community and belonging through their imagery.

Figure 68: Mosaic mural at the Artistic Statue More.

Chapter 5: Views and Reviews

Public Art has played an important role to give the germinating city of Newtown an identity of its own rather than carrying on the same aesthetics and visuals at public spaces in Kolkata. It reflects the society, invokes meaning and unique character in communities. Public art humanizes the built environment and provides a break from the sight of constant construction in the jungle of high rises. Through the reflection of local history and culture, Public Art provides communities a sense of place and identity.

Figure 69: Artist Sisir Sahana

Figure 70: 'Growth' by Sisir Sahana

Artworks like the site-specific installation 'Growth' By artist Sisir Sahana tells the story of the city that is growing. In an interview he proclaims –

> "As I had to create an artwork in a public space, I had to keep in mind that the artwork has to be installed in an outdoor space at road side. Everywhere we see construction happening as the city hasn't fully developed. Keeping that in mind I thought about creating an outdoor installation. Coming to materials the commissioners asked me to create a glass sculpture as there isn't any outdoor glass sculpture anywhere in Newtown or Kolkata. I was astonished at their temerity of suggesting about installing a glass artwork in an outdoor space in a city where construction is happening at every corner and the fragile work would be at risk of damage. Also, I appreciated the fact that they thought of taking the risk and asked me to create an artwork using my favourite medium. They just showed me the location where the artwork was to be installed and gave me the complete reign over the concept and the creative process. Various techniques were implemented to make the glass sculpture like casting, fusing, flame working, stained glass and many more. As the artwork was to be installed in an outdoor space it had to be large in size to have an impact as

> a smaller artwork possess the risk of going un-noticed. While brainstorming about the subject of the artwork, I came up with 'growth' as a metaphor for this ever-growing city. Initially I sketched plants and sprout that symbolizes growth and fused with the glass structure that is a representation of the newly constructed buildings all around that have a glass exterior. Thus, this work intends to create a harmony between the nature and the modern architecture. The most important aspect of public art is its relation with the surrounding. The artist must keep that in mind such that the viewers don't feel that the artwork is exotic and doesn't belong there. It was also important to represent humans not just machines and buildings as 'growth' also signifies the growth of human civilization, as without humans any invention, discovery or innovation couldn't exist. Human cooperation and compassion is what keeps humanity alive. Thus, the two human forms on either side of the sculpture is made in such a way as if guarding the tree. One male the other female which symbolize the importance of the contribution of both the sexes towards the human, social, cultural and scientific development. Images of human hands, hammer, spanner, etc. was made to show the materials that built the city. The colourful plants, branches, leaves celebrate life and nature. Coming to colours glass and ceramics are the only mediums that have permanency of colours. But still glass as a medium stays vulnerable to seasonal, weather, temperature changes as different glasses have different thermal capacity and thermal shock power. Thus, thick glass slabs were specially built to endure these. Then colours were put inside these slabs to create the colourful natural and geometric forms. Within one year of the completion of the artwork West Bengal was hit by the hurricane 'Amphan'. Buildings, trees, houses, roads and many more suffered huge damages but this sculpture stayed erect at its place without any damage. From this we can understand that measures were taken at the time of construction to make it strong enough to endure the natural calamity."[31]

When asked about the time taken to make this artwork the artist replied, 'It took me two to three months just to make the initial sketches and think about the design.' About the technique used the artist said, 'To make this sculpture I've used fusing technique, clear sheet glass along with chemicalized colored glass were used that would last a thousand years. A steel armature was made to hold the thick glass slabs that holds the whole structure together without being visible. It goes eight feet deep into the ground where the foundation of the structure is. This makes it endure against weather, climate changes and natural calamities.'

Several factors together make this twenty-eight-foot-high marvel the largest standing outdoor glass sculpture in India. At the end of the interview, he thanked the authorities of the Newtown Kolkata Development Authority to give him this opportunity to create this public sculpture for the common people to view. As glass as a medium is perceived to be vulnerable thus discouraging people to collect or commission glass artworks. Regarding which this artwork breaks the commonly perceived norms about this medium.

At the Artistic statue more is located the statue of a dejected man sitting on a hand. While talking about the artwork, its artist Pradip Das said –

> "I have reservations about the statues, sculptures, installations in Rajarhat. The township is well planned but the artworks has no relevance to its surroundings. The artwork that I am associated with was made almost ten years ago and when it was

[31] Sahana Sisir, 5 April 2025.

reinstalled in Newtown I was not informed. I had no role in the relocation and reinstallation of the artwork. This artwork was made as a part of a larger sculpture reflecting the prevalent theme of the Durga Puja Pandal thus it doesn't have any identity on its own. Moreover, this statue cannot be claimed to be an original piece of art as it was based on the artwork titled 'Hand of God' by Italian Sculptor Lorenzo Quinn, although we used a different material (metal chains, nuts, spanners) to make the statue than what was used in the original work (Bronze, Aluminium). The artwork was used like a Quotation and symbolized the rapid urban development. In the Larger artwork there were references of the Chaplin movie 'Modern Times' and also the original work (Hand of God). Pintu Sikder and I, along with a team of artists, sculptors, and welders made this statue. Thus, I don't consider this as my artwork."[32]

Figure 71: Pradip Das

Figure 72: Statue of a dejected man sitting on a hand

However, on my field surveys, I came across different artworks made in several mediums and had occasional conversations with onlookers or the co-viewers, who had varied opinions about the artworks. Some of them were appreciative while some were indifferent. When asked about their views on the statue at the Newtown bus stand island, an onlooker claimed, 'I am seeing this for the first time today. I come here often to deliver goods but had never noticed it before. It's not visible from the road.'[33]

While I was at the Rhino more or Gondar More, coincidentally it was time for the dismissal of classes at Bodhicharya Senior Secondary School. Many students swarming out of the school gate rows of hawkers and rickshaw lined up in front. While asking the students about the rhino statues one of them replied, 'I have been studying here for over a year now but never felt to stop and look at the statue. It's artistic for sure and adds beauty to the surrounding.' About its relevance and impact on people he said, 'As I don't live anywhere

[32] Das Pradip, 12 April 2025.
[33] Unknown, 19 March 2025.

nearby, I don't have the understanding of local sensibilities. For me it looks cool but I doubt about its relevance.'[34]

Another student who has been studying at the school for over nine years now said, 'It never attracted me enough to stop and take a look at it. It looks good but don't have much relevance to its surroundings. If it had been another artwork that conveyed the local story or local sentiments it would have been better."

At the junction where Aliah University Road meets Srija road stands the statue of a migrant woman with her children. A row of buses parked around while some drivers and helpers rest along with some chatting among themselves. While talking to them one of them stated "The statue was located somewhere else and has been shifted here four to five years ago. Its an idol of the goddess Durga and can be identified from the third eye on the forehead and the children are Saraswati, Laxmi and Kartick respectively. The big clubs that organises Durga puja often doesn't discard the idols as they are works of art in itself and thus installs them at different corners of the city, this statue is one of them."[35]

On social relevance and visibility of the statue another commented "This place is apt for the statue as it gets the space around for people to look at it and also it promotes harmony in the community. It is a great initiative not to discard the idols and install it in public spaces for the common people to admire."[36]

The reactions from the onlookers had been vivid like that of the viewers of the Biswa Bangla Gate. Some of them were regular visitors who often goes there to spend their time and to hang out with friends, while some went specially to see the architectural marvel. One such visitor who came to hang out with friends stated "The Biswa Bangla Gate is an architectural marvel that can represent Kolkata on par with top international modern architecture. I am quite fascinated by the structure and proud of it being located in my city." About the experience she said "I do often come here to hang out with friends. It's a large open space in the centre of the city where people can come sit or have a walk around while looking at the ever-flowing traffic and commuters of the city."[37]

A couple was waiting at the waiting lounge of the Gate clicking selfies and pictures of each other with the gate at the back. When asked about sharing their experience they said "Its our first time here one of our friends suggested this place. We loved it when looking from outside and expect to have a good time when we go inside to have dinner."[38]

The response from onlookers were diverse, ranging from admiration to indifference, highlighting the subjective nature of art and its interpretation. Like the installation Growth by Sisir Sahana, convey narratives of progress, resilience, and community spirit, while artworks like the rhino statues or the relocated Durga idols, evoked mixed reactions. They nonetheless contribute to the diverse cultural landscape of Newtown. Evidently, signifying the potential of public art to invite dialogue, provoke thought, and enhance the experience of urban life.

[34] Unknown, 19 March 2025.
[35] Unknown, 19 March 2025.
[36] Unknown, 19 March 2025.
[37] Bidhisha, 8 April 2025
[38] Azad and Sahista, 8 April 2025.

Conclusion

The previous pages explored the artistic landscape of Newtown, journaling through the history of public art in Kolkata and its evolution into the satellite city of Newtown. Through photo-documentation and analysis of the artworks including sculptures, statues, installations, architecture, and murals (painting and mosaic), this study has provided a comprehensive understanding of the public art scene in Newtown.

Through several field trips, photo documentation and interviews with viewers and artists, I have received valuable insights into the perception and creation of public art in the city. This study has demonstrated the significance of public art in shaping the urban identity and aesthetic experience of Newtown, highlighting its role in promoting community engagement, cultural expression, and urban vibrancy.

The Public Art landscape of Newtown presents a distinct public space imagery than that of what we have seen in Kolkata and Salt Lake. The number of Statues of Icons in Newtown is negligible as compared to that in Kolkata. Here we don’t encounter the monotony of the recurring Statues and busts of National leaders and Freedom Fighters at every corner of the streets and crossings. Instead, often presenting Unique, independent and creative artworks that narrates the story of this constantly developing city. Though certain artworks suffer from several problems like lack of visibility, physical damage and many more, due to improper planning like size of the artwork being too small, Uncontrolled plant growth around the artwork, constructions creating obstruction, unsuitable materials and so on. Still we find artworks where the intent to present a unique image is evident, through experimentation with and utilization of new mediums like glass, cement, etc., and choosing relevant subject for the artwork. Thus, creating artworks that have a positive socio-cultural impact on the community.

The research thus helped me understand the importance of proper planning, investment, documentation, preservation and conservation of public art. As it demands equal importance as other aspects of town planning, failing to do so can result in alienated and exotic looking artworks which lack social and cultural relevance. The findings of this study emphasize the need for continued documentation, preservation, and promotion of public art in Newtown and beyond, ensuring that these artworks reflect the city's cultural heritage and urban fabric.

Thus, this research provides a foundation for further exploration of public art in urban contexts, encouraging authorities, artists, and commissioners to prioritize the integration of art in city planning and development initiatives, and to recognize the value of public art in creating thriving, culturally rich, and sustainable urban environments.

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This dissertation explores the artistic landscape of Newtown, journaling through the history of public art in Kolkata and its evolution into the satellite city of Newtown. Through photo- documentation and analysis of the artworks including sculptures, statues, installations, architecture, and murals (painting and mosaic), this study has provided a comprehensive understanding of the public art scene in Newtown.
Through several field trips, photo documentation and interviews with viewers and artists, I have received valuable insights into the perception and creation of public art in the city. This study has demonstrated the significance of public art in shaping the urban identity and aesthetic experience of Newtown, highlighting its role in promoting community engagement, cultural expression, and urban vibrancy.
This research helped me understand the importance of proper planning, investment, documentation, preservation and conservation of public art. As it demands similar importance as other aspects of town planning and failing to do so can result in alienated and exotic looking artworks which lacks social and cultural relevance. The findings of this study emphasize the need for continued documentation, preservation, and promotion of public art in Newtown and beyond, ensuring that these artworks reflect the city's cultural heritage and urban fabric.
Thus, this research provides a foundation for further exploration of public art in urban contexts, encouraging authorities, artists, and comissioners to prioritize the integration of art in city planning and development initiatives, and to recognize the value of public art in creating thriving, culturally rich, and sustainable urban environments.

Public art is a form of visual art specifically created to be enjoyed by the general public. As it must be visually and physically accessible to the general population therefore Public Art is usually installed or staged in easily accessible public spaces, both indoor and outdoor like city parks, public squares, streets, airports, shopping complexes. Public art include murals, sculptures, memorials, public architecture and many more. They are often created in response to the place and community keeping in mind the social and cultural sensibilities as they serve a range of functions including communication, beautification, commemoration, etc. The inability to move Public Artworks from one location to another with ease distinguishes it from private art, which may move around and be displayed in various locations as it changes ownership. Public art can inspire and inform future generations about Cultures and histories while being a valuable asset to the community.
The relationship between art and the city has long been a subject of fascination. As public art plays a significant role in shaping urban identities, fostering community engagement, and enhancing the aesthetic experience of city spaces, it possesses the power to transform urban landscapes, create cultural landmarks, and provide a platform for social commentary and reflection.
In recent years, Newtown, the satellite township of Kolkata has witnessed several public artworks, including sculptures, murals, and installations being made/installed all around the city. These artworks are often reflective of the city's social, cultural and urban landscape, which contributes to present a visual narrative to the viewers. This dissertation narrates the visual story of the germinating city of New Town, its emergence and what makes it visually distinct from the larger city, Kolkata. Thus, examining the role of Public Art in

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Public Art refers to any work of art which is designed for and sited in a space accessible to the masses, in outdoor spaces like a public squares, parks, junctions, road-sides, as well as in indoor spaces like public halls, atriums, airports, shopping complexes and so on. Public art includes murals – painted or sculpted, statues and memorials, architectural works, monuments, sculptures, installations, site-specific artworks, light-and-sound in heritage structures, digital projections, street-theatre and other performances and so on. The tradition has existed for centuries, across numerous cultures and societies, and has served a range of functions including communication, beautification, commemoration and many more. Before any public art is installed at any specific site it goes through a process of observation, imagination, application and selection. The Municipal agency, however, plays a primary role in the process of selecting the artist, the site, the content, the medium, the budget and so on, followed by the process of commissioning, developing and managing the entire project. These usually are part of urbanization, developmental or cultural ventures across the metropolis, cities, townships and their suburbs. The agency that implement the public art generally comprise of several departments of the municipal administration such as city planning, parks and recreation, block or panchayat level development authorities, etc. The commissioning organization requests proposals for a designated project and select an artist or group to implement the proposed work. Usually, the selected artist/s work/s with a team of multidisciplinary professionals such as public art administrators, planners, architects, and often involve the local community for the execution of the artwork. Nevertheless, artists or groups are at times hand-picked or chosen by the ruling authorities or body of administration for any particular project whatsoever.

Generally, public art pieces are funded by municipal agencies using public funds through various channels. However, there is a growing trend where private developers are also funding and incorporating public art into their private development projects, often through public-private partnership. Public art has a vast audience to please, not just the artist and the selection committee, but the residents, onlookers, common people who can access the site. Thus, there is a degree of accountability assumed about the artwork that artists do not encounter as much when creating work for private use or display. This makes public artworks distinct from artworks that find its place in museums or galleries. Public art can be of many types, they can be Permanent or Temporary, Stand alone or Integrated, Site specific installation or Performance based, Static or kinetic or digital. Permanent public artworks are intended to stay at their position for longer periods of time maybe for decades or even centuries. Statues, sculptures, and architectural buildings generally fall into this category and thus are made with highly durable materials for example – metals like bronze, iron, steel, stones like marble, granite, sandstone, etc. The colonial statues in the Victoria Memorial complex (fig:1), The Biswa Bangla Gate in Newtown are examples of permanent public artworks. Temporary public artwork on the other hand has a predetermined lifespan which ranges from a few hours to a few years. Installations, projections and performances created for public space falls into this category. As the burden of longevity doesn't exist the materials and techniques that the artists uses are diverse and can include plants, paper, chalk, video, sound and performance, etc. the "Missing " stencil Project by Leena Kejriwal, in Kolkata represents the growing number of missing women to engage the public on the issue of sex trafficking, painting silhouettes of girls

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Speak Time	7 minute(s)

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Performance based public artworks include dance, theatre, music and other live actions in a public space and as they involve live performers Performance based public artworks are always temporary. These artworks are often produced in response to the unique features of or musical scores. One such performance based public art among others is Street theatres where theatrical exhibitions and performances are held in a public setting without the aid of a paid audience. Machine (1978), Aurat (1979), Hallabol (1988) and many more are few famous Indian street theatres. The earliest form of public art in India could be traced back to the cave paintings, sculptures and rock cut Architecture of Bhimbhetka, Ajanta, Ellora, Bagh, Badami etc. The rock and iron columns of Ashoka can also be labelled as public artworks made to exhibit his power and ideology. Thus we can find various kind and forms of public artwork installed in various parts of the subcontinent created in different time periods and to serve a variety of different purposes. They may be visually, materially, texturally and contextually distinct but they all together serves as a part of the rich historical culture of adoration of public spaces that aids in community building and expression. The earliest mention of Kolkata can be found in Manasa Mangal by the Bengali poet Bipradas and in Ain-e-Akbari compiled by Abdul Fazl, the Prime Minister of Akbar. Kolkata has a brief yet rich history from its birth in 1690 when Job Charnock arrived at the banks of the Hoogly river, where he leased three villages inhabited by Indian merchants, namely Sutanoti, Kalikata and Gobindapur from the zamindar Savarna Ray Chowdhuri to set up a British trade settlement by establishing an artificial riverine port. The newly founded city gradually became the power centre of East India Company after the British army led by Lord Clive defeated Bengal's nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah in 1757. Along with the Imperial rule came colonial Urbanization where several industries grew and factories were built. With this economic growth new architecture also developed with palaces built in the British sector of the city further the social elites of the city also built mansions outside the British sector that imitated British architecture. They also imposed Western sensibilities and aestheticism through establishing art schools in Calcutta and Madras in 1854 and in Bombay in 1857 along with commemorating marble or bronze statues, busts of the queen, princes and other British generals all over the city. built to project the power and grandeur of the imperial rulers that stayed all around the city long after India got its Independence. This chapter discusses about the development of the city of Calcutta (now Kolkata), its expansion, the creation of the two satellite cities of Salt Lake and Newtown and its century-old culture of displaying and installing art works in public spaces.

The pre-Independence art and architecture of the city was an attempt to cater to the Western sensibilities and impose their ego on the native psyche. After independence, the colonial past still remained deeply embedded in the city's cultural demography and often pops up through its Art, Architecture, Music, etc. As the public artworks under review are mainly commissioned by the Government for various reasons including beautification, or installed by private entities with due permission from the Government. Thus they reflect the agenda and intent of the ruling class or party whatsoever. Especially the statues of political personalities are placed, and occasionally replaced, by the new Government in power. Thus we can reckon the shifts in public imagery along with the shifting of political choices and outlook. Initiated as a post-independence political wave and an attempt of decolonization, the first United Front government in West Bengal removed all the

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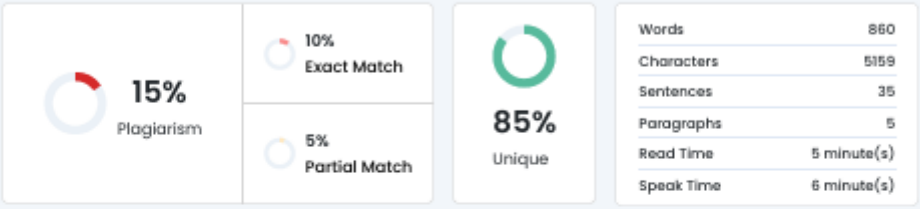

Words	860
Characters	5159
Sentences	35
Paragraphs	5
Read Time	5 minute(s)
Speak Time	6 minute(s)

Content Checked For Plagiarism

The iconic Netaji statue at Shyambazar 5 point crossing Sculpted in 1969 by Nagesh Yoglekar shows Netaji mounted on a horse back is a prime example of this. Here, Netaji can be seen posing in the same way as the Lieutenant-General James Outram's bronze sculpture by John Henry Foley that can be found today in the Victoria Memorial Complex. The public spaces in Kolkata is filled with such marble and bronze statues and busts today we can find many more made of other materials like plaster and fiber cast that on the surface looks like the marble but is much cheaper to produce. Today, statues of Indian icons have become a very common sight in public spaces. Busts and full figure statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Netaji most commonly among many others can be found at almost every junctions.

Public spaces of Kolkata started to be adorned with murals from the 1960's. Paintings as well as mosaic murals were made in building walls. The mural that can be found at the façade of the UCO bank head office building located at Old Court House Street is considered to be the first mosaic mural of Kolkata. Made in 1963 by artist Amal Ghosh the 80ft mosaic mural on the bank building adjacent to Tea Board. The artwork still exists today and has retained its colour but is obscured by the greenery and other clutter that have come up on the pavement in front of it. Unlike the mural painted by Shanu Lahiri and her team of artists on a 200-metre-long wall of the workshop of Hindustan Motors along Justice Chandra Madhab Road in 1985, which was wiped out and painted over with flat blue colour. The mural celebrated harmony between nature and humankind with drawings of birds, animals and trees.

With time the city's population grew and because of the exodus of people from Bangladesh in 1947 after the partition of India it became impossible to for the city to accommodate the excess population. Thus in 1955 The Bengal government under Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy Proposed to fillup the salt lakes in the east of Kolkata to create the Saltlake city or Bidhannagar to accommodate the ever growing population. From the 70's people from middle and low-income groups started residing in the newly created city. However, today the high end satellite town is far from that objective, with the East-West Metro making its way through the enormous mansions, high-rises, shopping malls, multiplexes and the giant sports stadium. In this new city the artworks installed in the public spaces mostly in the islands of every junction can be labelled as an extension of the statues in Kolkata. From Satyajit Ray in EZCC island, to Mother Teresa in HB island, Mahatma Gandhi in AD island, Rabindranath Tagore in Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan Island and many more exemplify the statue mania for the sake of beautification. The population kept rising to the point where the newly built Saltlake too failed to accommodate the excess people. In the late 1990s the Government of Bengal under then Chief Minister Jyoti Basu planned to develop a new satellite city nearly three times the size of Saltlake in the North eastern periphery of the city, which actualised following the liberalization of the economy, and influenced by private developers and the entry of the private sector in the housing sector. Thus giving birth to Rajarhat Newtown which developed in phases and is divided into Action Area I, II, III and a Central Business District. The name Rajarhat came from the words "raja", meaning king, and "haat", meaning marketplace, in Bengali.

"The name of Rajarhat came about in 1649 when Gourhari Ray Chaudhury decided to start a market in the area. He was the son of Lakshmikanta Gangopadhyay of the Sabarna Ray Chaudhury family. In 1608, Raja Man Singh had given Gangopadhyay zamindari of five parganas from Barrackpore to Gangasagar. They were the tax-collectors (majumdar) and revered as kings, the name Rajarhat was given to just the spot where the market came up but it spread to include the area surrounding it." said historian Haripada Bhowmick while explaining about the etymology and history behind the township.

This satellite city presents public artworks that are visually distinct from what we've been used to see around Kolkata and Saltlake. The icon statues make way to installations, sculptures and murals, that have been installed or made at different junctions, parks, underpasses, etc. These artworks moved away from being the

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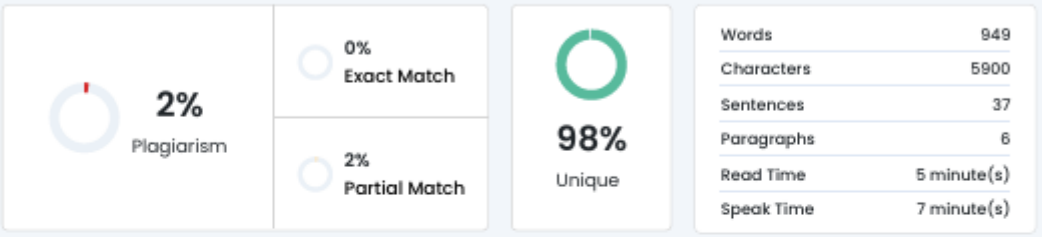

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New Town caters to the service sector by providing workplaces, financial institutions, universities, schools, colleges, think tanks, research institutions, art galleries, hospitals, etc. The city boasts a mix of residential, commercial and industrial complexes in close proximity and displays a poly-centric landscape characterized by multiple, interconnected centres of activity, service and residence, these centres being interlinked through transportation, communication, and economic networks, encouraging a sense of regional integration.As one travels through New Town, they are greeted by wide roads, towering buildings in residential, commercial, and industrial complexes, along with various state-sanctioned installations, sculptures, and architectural structures in its proximity. Across the city these state-led designed Public art and architecture stand out as markers of intent to develop and transform the landscape into a particular form of urbanity.

At the Narkel Bagan crossing the towering structure of The Biswa Bangla Gate (formerly called as Kolkata Gate) punctuates the city. Erected at the 3rd Rotary in front of Rabindra Tirtha on Biswa Bangla Sarani, it has a unique architectural feature with two parabolic arches rising from 4 islands at the inter-section of the road-crossing and joining at the top. The architectural structure stands 55 meters tall and has an overall diameter of 220 metres with a circular ring shape platform walkway of 60 metre diameter at a height 25m from ground designed to accommodate around 100 viewers at a time. The first choice for the erection of the proposed structure of the Gate was on VIP Road or Kazi Nazrul Islam Sarani, near the Haldiram's flyover from the airport, which rather marked the entry into New Town. The other option were near Chinar Park, or near Nazrul Tirtha but these choices were discarded due to lack of space, litigation and the under construction Metro corridor with elevated pillars on the ground, presented as another roadblock congesting these spaces further. Finally, after eliminating almost every other options owing to some problem or the other, the structure was erected at the location of Narkelbagan crossing, that leads in all the four directions towards Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in the north, the wetlands in the south, Sector 5 in the west and Action Area 3 in the east.

This magnificent structure was designed by a Pune based Architectural firm Vector Designs and constructed between 6 March 2017 and 27 January 2018. The structure comprises of two inverted parabolas constructed using flat steel plates in entirety weighing Around 70 tons. Along with a circular ring shape platform walkway with an outer circumference made of curved double glazed glass. This walkway functions as a viewing gallery with the interior wall adorned with the portraits of as well as aphorisms and quotations by historical and nationalist icons like Rabindranath Tagore, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sarojini Naidu, Swami Vivekananda, Netaji, Ramkrishna and so on. The panorama also includes a poem written by then Chief Minister of West Bengal.

Following the Biswa Bangla Sarani in the north, we encounter the installation called Mangaldeep, created by architect Prabir Mitra, at Aakankha Island. It is a huge geometrical metallic installation that is modern in representation, but resembles a traditional Poncho Pradeep, i.e., a group of five lamps, that is lit in Bengali

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Plagiarism Scan Report

0% Plagiarism	0% Exact Match 0% Partial Match
100% Unique	

Words	962
Characters	5676
Sentences	39
Paragraphs	2
Read Time	5 minute(s)
Speak Time	7 minute(s)

Content Checked For Plagiarism

In the island on the opposite side we see a dejected man with his head lowered and his arms above his knees sitting on a gigantic palm that seems like protruding out of the ground. The palm is made up of metal chains joined together, whereas the man sitting on it is created by joining tons of metal nuts and spanners. The statue initially created to adorn the Durga Puja pandal of Kashi Bose Lane near Shyambazar area in north Kolkata in 2016 by artist Pradip Das was later moved and installed in its present location. The statue inspired from Rodin's sculpture the thinker and Chaplin's movie Modern Times presents a very vulnerable and sensitive concept through the use of a hard medium like metal chains, nuts and spanners, the artist proclaimed in an interview. The statue got damaged at some point of time which is evident from its present condition as today the man sits with a missing left arm and a portion from its right leg. On another island we see a statue comprising of the portraits of three icons of the Bengal renaissance titled 'Three Luminaries' by artist Subhaprasanna Bhattacharjee. The artwork comprises of three flat metal plates cut out into the portraits of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Raja Rammohan Roy coloured in yellow, green and blue respectively placed on a cemented platform.

The largest sculpture at this location peeps just from behind that group of three. In this island on the south of the junction that turns to the Aliah University Road we see several metal pipes are joined together to form two geometrical human figures, like a mother and a daughter. The mother is carrying a basket on her head with her left hand holding on to it with the daughter beside her with long hair flowing down her head. The black painted metal pipes are straight and joined together to give the statue an angular form. Travelling down the Aliah University Road from the artistic statue more towards Aliah University we witness a few more statues. The first of those is the statue of a migrant woman carrying a baby in her arms along with two children beside her. There is a circular ring behind her head with four hands protruding out on either side. Originally created as the Durga idol for Barisha Club Durga puja at Behala Sakherbazar in 2020. The fibreglass statue created by sculptor Pallab Bhowmick in his studio at Krishnanagar in Nadia district presented the goddess as a migrant worker with a shirtless child on her lap conceived as Kartick. Goddess Saraswati and Lakshmi are also represented as migrant children standing beside their mother. The statue however bears resemblance to Bikash Bhattacharjee's 1989 oil painting 'Darpamoyee.' The statue is greyish in colour and looks as if is moulded out of clay. It was installed at its present location in March 2021 after the club officials along with the state government agreed upon preserving the work of art. At the Aliah University crossing island is a glass installation by artist Sisir Sahana. The artwork titled 'Growth' is noted as the largest outdoor glass installation in India. The installation standing at 24ft height and 13ft width has a central glass tower with an arrow like metal structure dissecting it through the middle horizontally. It has been decorated with floral and foliage patterns in bold vermillion and red colours along with other designs in grey and ultramarine. The artwork has two human figures on either side of the arrow -- a man and a woman -- solid black in colour superimposed onto the lower half of the pillar. It symbolizes the role of both the sexes in the cultural growth of the society. Another figure placed on the top is sitting on the pillar with legs suspended downwards and looking up into the sky symbolizing the scientific, socio-cultural development of the city. The artwork is mounted on a brick

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Plagiarism Scan Report

4% Plagiarism	0% Exact Match
	4% Partial Match
96% Unique	

Words	969
Characters	5844
Sentences	40
Paragraphs	7
Read Time	5 minute(s)
Speak Time	7 minute(s)

Content Checked For Plagiarism

The dogs surrounding the man looks at him as if being absorbed into the music. The fibreglass statue coated with a brownish paint has an inscription in one rock that reads as 'Debu 2012' which informs us about the year of execution and installation of this artwork. Today the layer of paint has been flaking off and structural damage can be observed in the dogs, from having limbs missing to looking completely degenerative. At the Newtown bus stand crossing island hiding behind the ongoing construction for the metro station is a fibreglass statue of a portrait bust mounted on a pillar. Accompanying it on each side are two horse figures. The portrait has elongated eyes and ears with ornamented crown and neck piece. Dust has accumulated all over the artwork due to lack of maintenance and the on-going construction works. At the bottom of the statue on the right is a dust clad plate with the text that can be read with difficulty when observed closely – 'Sculpture inaugurated by former Indian cricket captain Sri Sourav Ganguly on 10/06/2012 in presence of Firhad Hakim M-I-C Urban Development Department Government of West Bengal'
The black paint on the artwork has torn off from several spots especially the tails of the horses making the underlying material apparent. The divider at the Police Phari crossing at the Bishwa Bangla Sarani shelters an artwork that comprises of five human figures. The one in front is the statue of Swami Vivekananda – who appears to be standing with a stern posture and a straight face. Following him are four figures representing people from different religions -- Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Sikhism respectively, with grossly disproportionate figures and frigid faces. The platform on which the statues are mounted bears an inscription stating the title of the artwork –
'Swami Vivekananda leading an all Religion group to Vivek Tirtha.'
This is because of the statues facing the Vivek Tirtha building across Bishwa Bangla Sarani.
Thus the landscape of Newtown's public spaces has been filled with several public artworks made by using different materials at different points of time. The replica of Seven Wonders of the World could be seen at Eco Park that consists of the miniature versions of the Taj Mahal, the Pyramids, the Sphinx, Christ the Redeemer, Easter Island statues, the Colosseum and The Lost City of Petra. At the sculpture we encounter several statues and reliefs that depicts portraits of social and cultural icons like Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Satyajit Roy, Swami Vivekananda, etc. along with historical scenes from tales of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Battle of Plassey and lots more. The sculptures and installations scattered throughout Newtown are often far more than decorative addition. They serve as visual narratives that reflect the city's evolution, ideals, and layered identity. From re-imagined Durga idols to modern glass installation, they play a role in shaping public spaces as well as visual experiences where history, culture, and urban development intersect, offering residents and onlookers a chance to pause and reflect within a constantly transforming cosmopolitan environment. Murals emerged as a form of art to adorn and beautify public spaces in the city of Kolkata around 1960's. With the constant urbanization and extension of its peripheries, the city was beautified with several public artworks including Murals. Newtown since its inception around 2007 to 2010 has its own set of murals that includes both in the mediums of painting and mosaic-tiles. With the gradual urban development of this township, sculptures, statues and installations were executed and installed; murals share the same emergence story as them. Like sculptures, statues and installations, it serves an important part in the adornment of the city.

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Plagiarism Scan Report

7% Plagiarism	0% Exact Match
	7% Partial Match
93% Unique	

Words	912
Characters	5529
Sentences	39
Paragraphs	3
Read Time	5 minute(s)
Speak Time	7 minute(s)

Content Checked For Plagiarism

Another mural that celebrates the city of Kolkata and Newtown finds its place at the adjacent subway that connects Rabindra Tirtha and Smart Plaza. The mural created by artist Sayan Mukherjee starts with the image of a Daliyah and a pinwheel or tagar flower; above them a group of flying birds leads us to a scene with two men taking a dip in the Hooghly river in the backdrop of Howrah Bridge at sunset. Then we see a crowd in front of the New town Coffee House following which we encounter another man taking a dip in the Ganges while praying. in front of the Dakshineshwar Temple, an iconic place of worship for the Bengali Hidus. Hereafter we see two Bengali cuisines consisting of the Hilsa fish and Prawns that signify the Bangal and Ghoti communities of Bengal respectively. Then we see an image of Belur Math, The Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission a place of pilgrimage for people from all over the world professing different religious faiths. Further we encounter a group of people coloured in various hues gathered in front of the Bishwa Bangla Convention Centre, followed by images of iconic spots of Kolkata like the Princep Monument, The Vidyasagar Setu and a Tram. A group of boys playing football in the grounds of Maidan while the majestic architecture of The Victoria Memorial Hall peeps from the distance beyond the grove.

Covered in Bright yellow is an image of the iconic Taxi of Kolkata followed by the Netaji statue at the Shyam Bazar crossing. A scene with kashful or kans grass flower that in Bengali culture seen as a symbol of autumn approaching and beginning of the Durga Puja Celebrations, following which is an image of Goddess Durga. The mural ends with a view of the Bishwa Bangla Gate with Traffic underneath. The Walls of the under Pass at Narkel Bagan shelters another Captivating mural by artist Sayan Mukherjee. This mural obtains its inspiration from nature. Thus, flora and fauna become the main subject for this mural. Images of birds like Parrots, Maynas, stork, owl, Kingfishers along with flowers and plants like Lotus, Water lily, Daliah, Tulip, Sunflower, Clover adorns the walls. With a rich and vibrant colour palette the artist brings the subjects to life and light up the mundane scenery for the commuters. While entering Eco park through gate no. 1 we encounter a stretch of wall carrying mural paintings, which also contributes to the naming of the street as 'Art Street'. The long stretch of mural executed by commercial artwork company 'srs creative space' starts with an image of Satyajit Ray looking through a movie camera, following which is a movie reel containing images of his movie characters and scenes, 'Hirak Rajar Deshe', 'Feluda', 'Mahanagar', ' Panther Panchali' respectively. Then we see a group of santhal women dancing and a man playing the dholak, followed by masks and a couple of baul singers. Hereafter the image of Newtown Coffee House makes way to a couple of Kathak dancers. Clay horse of Krishnanagar and wooden dolls of Burdwan are an import part of Bengal's art, whose image also finds its place in this Mural. The national animal of India the Royal Bengal Tiger is also present. Following these are the portraits of Rabindranath Tagore, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sharada Devi. A tram moving through the streets gives way to a woman with the Dhunuchi (Clay or earthenware vessel that holds burning incense) in her mouth, dancing in front of the Goddess Durga idol. Then continues the images of iconic spots from Kolkata and Newtown, Victoria Memoria hall, Biswa Bangla Gate, Biswa Bangla Convention Centre followed by the HIDCO Bhawan. Further we see images that visualize the concept of the digital world and smart city; a man wearing headphones, a girl wearing Virtual Reality Glasses, a city

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Plagiarism Scan Report

0% Plagiarism	0% Exact Match 0% Partial Match
100% Unique	

Words	977
Characters	5862
Sentences	48
Paragraphs	4
Read Time	5 minute(s)
Speak Time	7 minute(s)

Content Checked For Plagiarism

In one of the islands at the Artistic Statue More we encounter the only mosaic mural at a public space in Newtown. The mural created by joining thousands of broken pieces of tiles and designing them into an image in the form of a collage. The image depicts a dhoti kurta clad man holding flowers in his hand looking at his beloved, a woman wearing saree sitting next to him with a parrot sitting on her palm. The rest of the images consists of a tree, few buildings along with birds and animals like tortoise, fish, parrot, rooster, elephant, peacock and many more. The artwork titled 'Paradise' presents to the viewers a representation of what paradise is in artist Ashoke Mullick's imagination. People being one with nature and civilization. Public Art has played an important role to give the germinating city of Newtown an identity of its own rather than carrying on the same aesthetics and visuals at public spaces in Kolkata. It reflects the society, invokes meaning and unique character in communities. Public art humanizes the built environment and provides a break from the sight of constant construction in the jungle of high rises. Through the reflection of local history and culture, Public Art provides communities a sense of place and identity. Artworks like the site-specific installation 'Growth' By artist Sisir Sahana tells the story of the city that is growing. In an interview he proclaims –

"As I had to create an artwork in a public space, I had to keep in mind that the artwork has to be installed in an outdoor space at road side. Everywhere we see construction happening as the city hasn't fully developed. Keeping that in mind I thought about creating an outdoor installation. Coming to materials the commissioners asked me to create a glass sculpture as there isn't any outdoor glass sculpture anywhere in Newtown or Kolkata. I was astonished at their temerity of suggesting about installing a glass artwork in an outdoor space in a city where construction is happening at every corner and the fragile work would be at risk of damage. Also, I appreciated the fact that they thought of taking the risk and asked me to create an artwork using my favourite medium. They just showed me the location where the artwork was to be installed and gave me the complete reign over the concept and the creative process. Various techniques were implemented to make the glass sculpture like casting, fusing, flame working, stained glass and many more. As the artwork was to be installed in an outdoor space it had to be large in size to have an impact as a smaller artwork possess the risk of going un-noticed. While brainstorming about the subject of the artwork, I came up with 'growth' as a metaphor for this ever-growing city. Initially I sketched plants and sprout that symbolizes growth and fused with the glass structure that is a representation of the newly constructed buildings all around that have a glass exterior. Thus, this work intends to create a harmony between the nature and the modern architecture. The most important aspect of public art is its relation with the surrounding. The artist must keep that in mind such that the viewers don't feel that the artwork is exotic and doesn't belong there. It was also important to represent humans not just machines and buildings as 'growth' also signifies the growth of human civilization, as without humans any invention, discovery or innovation couldn't exist. Human cooperation and compassion is what keeps humanity alive. Thus, the two human forms on either side of the sculpture is made in such a way as if guarding the tree. One male the other female which symbolize the importance of the contribution of both the sexes towards the human, social, cultural and scientific development. Images of human hands, hammer, spanner, etc. was made to show the materials

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Date: 14-04-2025

Plagiarism Scan Report

2%
Plagiarism

0%
Exact Match

2%
Partial Match

98%
Unique

Words	954
Characters	5481
Sentences	45
Paragraphs	10
Read Time	5 minute(s)
Speak Time	7 minute(s)

Content Checked For Plagiarism

At the Artistic statue more is located the statue of a dejected man sitting on a hand. While talking about the artwork, its artist Pradip Das said –

"I have reservations about the statues, sculptures, installations in Rajarhat. The township is well planned but the artworks has no relevance to its surroundings. The artwork that I am associated with was made almost ten years ago and when it was reinstalled in Newtown I was not informed. I had no role in the relocation and reinstallation of the artwork. This artwork was made as a part of a larger sculpture reflecting the prevalent theme of the Durga Puja Pandal thus it doesn't have any identity on its own. Moreover, this statue cannot be claimed to be an original piece of art as it was based on the artwork titled 'Hand of God' by Italian Sculptor Lorenzo Quinn, although we used a different material (metal chains, nuts, spanners) to make the statue than what was used in the original work (Bronze, Aluminium). The artwork was used like a Quotation and symbolized the rapid urban development. In the Larger artwork there were references of the Chaplin movie 'Modern Times' and also the original work (Hand of God). Pintu Sikder and I, along with a team of artists, sculptors, and welders made this statue. Thus, I don't consider this as my artwork."

However, on my field surveys, I came across different artworks made in several mediums and had occasional conversations with onlookers or the co-viewers, who had varied opinions about the artworks. Some of them were appreciative while some were indifferent. When asked about their views on the statue at the Newtown bus stand island, an onlooker claimed, 'I am seeing this for the first time today. I come here often to deliver goods but had never noticed it before. It's not visible from the road.'

While I was at the Rhino more or Gondar More, coincidentally it was time for the dismissal of classes at Bodhicharya Senior Secondary School. Many students swarming out of the school gate rows of hawkers and rickshaw lined up in front. While asking the students about the rhino statues one of them replied, 'I have been studying here for over a year now but never felt to stop and look at the statue. It's artistic for sure and adds beauty to the surrounding.' About its relevance and impact on people he said, 'As I don't live anywhere nearby, I don't have the understanding of local sensibilities. For me it looks cool but I doubt about its relevance.'

Another student who has been studying at the school for over nine years now said, 'It never attracted me enough to stop and take a look at it. It looks good but don't have much relevance to its surroundings. If it had been another artwork that conveyed the local story or local sentiments it would have been better."

At the junction where Aliah University Road meets Srija road stands the statue of a migrant woman with her children. A row of buses parked around while some drivers and helpers rest along with some chatting among themselves. While talking to them one of them stated "The statue was located somewhere else and has been shifted here four to five years ago. Its an idol of the goddess Durga and can be identified from the third eye on the forehead and the children are Saraswati, Laxmi and Kartick respectively. The big clubs that organises Durga puja often doesn't discard the idols as they are works of art in itself and thus installs them at different corners of the city, this statue is one of them."

On social relevance and visibility of the statue another commented "This place is apt for the statue as it gets the space around for people to look at it and also it promotes harmony in the community. It is a great